IN THE CLAIMS

24. (Currently Amended) A method for suppressing optical defects in a paint system, wherein the paint system is one of a multicoat color paint system, a multicoat effect paint system, a multicoat color and effect paint system, a color refinish paint system, an effect refinish paint system, and a color and effect refinish paint system, comprising including an associative thickener in the paint system, wherein the associative thickener ~~that is at least one of~~comprises a dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether and optionally a polyurethane-based associative thickener, wherein the alkyl in the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether is at least one of n-pentyl and n-hexyl.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the paint system comprises at least one basecoat layer and at least one clearcoat layer.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the basecoat layer is produced from an aqueous basecoat material.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the aqueous basecoat material comprises a polyurethane polymer.

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the associative thickener is present in a basecoat layer.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the polyurethane-based associative thickener and the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether are present in a basecoat layer.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24, wherein the optical defects comprise at least one of:

i) light-colored spots, introduced by at least one of dried-up liquid residues and abrasion dust residues, which remain after abrading of defects in the paint system or in a surfacer that is to be coated with the paint system; and

ii) polishing spots, induced by the polishing of defects in the paint system, which is performed for the purpose of refinishing the paint system.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein the aqueous basecoat material comprises

(A) at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane,

(B) at least one crosslinking agent,

(C) at least one pigment that is at least one of a color pigment, an effect pigment, and a color and effect pigment,

(D) at least one neutralizing agent,

(E) at least one inorganic thickener,

(F) an associative thickener ~~that is at least one of~~comprising a dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether and optionally a polyurethane-based associative thickener, wherein the alkyl in the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether is at least one of n-pentyl and n-hexyl,

(G) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyacrylate resin prepared in the presence of a water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane, and

(H) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyester resin.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.5 to 11% by weight of the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.1 to 4% by weight of the polyurethane-based associative thickener.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the aqueous basecoat material further comprises at least one additive.

35. (Previously Presented) The paint system prepared by the process of claim 24.

36. (Previously Presented) The paint system of claim 35, wherein the paint system is one of an original coating for a motor vehicle body, an industrial coating, an electrical components coating, a coil coating, a packaging coating, a plastics coating, and a furniture coating.

37. (Currently Amended) An aqueous basecoat material comprising

(A) at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane,

(B) at least one crosslinking agent,

(C) at least one pigment that is at least one of a color pigment, an effect pigment, and a color and effect pigment,

(D) at least one neutralizing agent,

(E) at least one inorganic thickener,

(F) an associative thickener ~~that is at least one of~~comprising a dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether and optionally a polyurethane-based associative thickener, wherein the alkyl in the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether is at least one of n-pentyl and n-hexyl,

(G) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyacrylate resin prepared in the presence of a water-soluble or -dispersible polyurethane, and

(H) optionally, at least one water-soluble or -dispersible polyester resin.

38. (Previously Presented) The aqueous basecoat material of claim 37, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.5 to 11% by weight of the dipropylene glycol monoalkyl ether.

39. (Previously Presented) The aqueous basecoat material of claim 37, wherein the aqueous basecoat material, based on its overall weight, contains from 0.1 to 4% by weight of the polyurethane-based associative thickener.

40. (Previously Presented) The aqueous basecoat material of claim 37 further comprises at least one additive.

41. (Previously Presented) A paint system comprising at least one basecoat layer; wherein the paint system is one of a multicoat color paint system, a multicoat effect paint system, a multicoat color and effect paint system, a color refinish paint system, an effect refinish paint system, and a color and effect refinish paint system; and wherein the basecoat layer is produced from the aqueous basecoat material of claim 37.